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to bind and loose sinners, has faithfully exercised this power throughout the centuries, though the manner of its exercise has varied to meet the changing needs of successive periods. In the words of the author. "The Catholic student will not readily believe that these differences, striking as they are, have found a place in the Church otherwise than 'with the permission' of our Saviour'."

CHARLES F. AIKEN.

The Maya Indians of Southern Yucatan and Northern British Honduras. By Thomas W. F. Gann. Bulletin 64, Bureau of American Ethnology, Washington, 1918. Pp. 146.

The first part of Gann's volume is a description of the customs, ceremonies, and mode of life of the present-day Indians, of the eastern section of the Yucatan peninsula, the second a description of mound excavations made in the same eastern Maya area. The whole work is characterized by fidelity to the best traditions of scientific American ethnology and archaeology.

While the volume deals primarily with ethnological and archaeological data, it is of interest to the historian. The Mayas, of whom the Indians herein described are seemingly the direct descendants, attained probably the highest plane of culture reached by any group in pre-Columbian America. Recent progress in deciphering the Maya inscriptions has resulted in the working out of a fairly consecutive chronology that goes back to the beginning of our era, and has given us one date of 100 B. C. Professor Holmes has called archaeology—and he might have included ethnology—"the great retriever of history." Before many years Maya history may be as truly if not as fully "retrieved" as Assyro-Babylonian has been in the last few decades.

JOHN M. COOPER.

On the Trail of the Pigmies. By Dr. Leonard John Vanden Bergh. J. A. McCann Co., New York, 1921. Pp. 264.

Father Vanden Bergh's volume is an interesting and valuable contribution to African ethnology. His expedition spent eleven months in 1919-20 in the region extending from Mombasa on the east coast to Lakes Victoria and Albert Nyanza and

penetrated beyond the continental divide into the eastern fringe of the great Congo forest. Catholic missionaries long resident in the territory traversed supplied much important information on native culture, and Father Vanden Bergh was greatly aided in his own observations by his earlier experience as a missionary from 1897 to 1905 in Uganda and Kavirondo and by his acquaintance with the Luganda tongue and with the lingua franca of the territory, Kiswahili. Incidentally it should be mentioned that the expedition brought back a magnificent series of moving pictures illustrating native life, and the first movies ever taken of the forest pygmies.

Most of the volume is devoted to descriptive accounts of the culture of the Wanyiki, the Wakamba, the Wakikuyu, the Masai, the Wakavirondo, and the pygmy Mambuti. Apart from some incidental references to the benign influence of the missionaries and to the African colonial policies of England and Belgium, the most important section of the work, judged from the historical as well as from the ethnological viewpoint, is the last chapter dealing with the Mambuti pygmies of the eastern Congo forest.

Our available evidence points to these diminutive negroids as the earlier inhabitants of the equatorial belt who have been pushed back into the jungle depths by later invading waves of distinctly more advanced agricultural negro tribes. Father Vanden Bergh's account of their extremely simple culture or lack of it as contrasting with the Mambuti's monogamous marriage custom, their honesty and relatively high morality is in general agreement with our other sources on the little known and shy Pigmy forest dwellers. Their apparent belief in a higher Deity, as gathered by Father Vanden Bergh, seems to corroborate the testimony of LeRoy, Powell-Cotton, Verner, Van der Burgt, and others.

The pygmy negroids of equatorial Africa, of the Andaman Islands, the Malay Peninsula, the Philippines, and to a certain extent even those of New Guinea are, the evidence seemingly shows, relatively unchanged survivals from an earlier or pre-agricultural stage. All new or corroborative field evidence such as that presented to us by Father Vanden Bergh contributes at a crucial point to our data for reconstructing the early history of human culture. Most such reconstructions for the last half

century have been based on data drawn from the Australian tribes or from the advanced agricultural and pastoral peoples.

JOHN M. COOPER.

Archeology Series. By Professor Orazio Marucchi and E. Sylvester Berry. Edited by Roderick MacEachen, D.D. Five volumes. Wheeling, W. Va. Catholic Book Co.

These five little volumes written in a simple but impressive style bring the treasures of Archeology to many who would be unable to secure the larger or more ponderous tomes which are to be found in recesses of inaccessible libraries. They tell us much of early Church history and make live again in our midst the heroic faith of the early Christians, whose lives should be an inspiration. Great was the faith of our brethren of the olden time, and they left in the subterranean meeting-places, the Catacombs, many evidences of their devotion and charity. They carved inscriptions on the tombs of their dead which express their belief, and have thus handed down to us many testimonials of their faith. These charming volumes which Dr. MacEachen has placed within the reach of the modest purse tell us the story of Catacombs in a most attractive form, and are beautifully illustrated.

Volume I. describes the origin and history of the Roman catacombs, viz., the cemeteries of St. Pancratius, SS. Processus and Martinian. St. Cyriaca, St. Callistus, St. Sebastian, St. Agnes, St. Valentine, etc. Volume II describes the many inscriptions and frescoes of the catacombs which prove the antiquity of our Faith in the divinity of Christ, the veneration of the Blessed Virgin and the saints, Baptism, the Holy Eucharist, Marriage, Holy Orders, the primacy of St. Peter. Volume III. gives a brief outline of the lives of the early Popes from St. Peter to St. Damasus, most of whom were martyrs. Volume IV. outlines the early persecutions from the time of St. Stephen, the first martyr, to the persecution of Julian, the Apostate. Volume V., after a brief mention of the early domestic churches, and the titled churches of Rome, describes the ancient Christian basilicas of St. John Lateran, St. Peter, St. Paul, the Holy Cross in Jerusalem, St. Lawrence, St. Agnes, St. Pudentiana, St. Praxedes and St. Clement.

P. W. B.